

Involving Families



Involving families and making them feel welcomed is crucial for a successful transition into kindergarten. Research indicates that children whose families are involved in their schools achieve at higher levels than children whose families are not involved.¹ They also have better school attendance, more positive attitude and behavior, higher graduation rates, and greater enrollment in higher education.²

Schools need to eliminate any potential barriers for parents to be involved. In addition, schools can expand their definition of parent involvement by recognizing the important contribution the family makes to a child's education at home. Parents need to know that they are their child's first teacher and are critical in their child's success. Schools need to build personal relationships with those families who are hesitant to become involved. The keys to family involvement are:

- Get to know individual families.
- Make them feel welcome in the school and individual classrooms.
- Communicate regularly and effectively.

¹ Fan, X., and Chen, M. (2001). Parental Involvement and Students' Academic Achievement: A Meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 13, 1-22.

² Henderson, A., and Berla, N. (1994). *A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement*. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education

Ready Schools reach out to families, before the child enters kindergarten, to make them feel welcome and part of the educational community and process. There are numerous ways to receive families and some suggestions are below, but each school should customize their programs to meet the unique needs of their population.

- Start compiling a list of next year's kindergarten class and send invitations to the families for all school events such as open houses, carnivals, fine arts programs, literacy or math nights.
- Expand upon the typical kindergarten round-up with family friendly activities.
- Set-up personal school tours or mini-tours with families during or after school hours.
- Maintain regular contact with incoming families by sending out the weekly school bulletins/newsletters.

